

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-11 are pending. Claim 1 has been amended. No new matter has been presented.

Initially, Applicants thank the Examiner for her courtesy in conducting a telephone interview on December 11, 2008. During the interview, it was agreed that claim 1 is fully supported by the specification for the reasons discussed below in detail. Also, the Examiner indicated that amending claim 1 to better define the claimed distal portion extending from a proximal starting point of the shaft to a distal end of the shaft would overcome the prior art rejection.

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner contends that claim 1's recitation of "a height of the plurality of ribs does not increase relative to a longitudinal axis of the shaft from the proximal start of the distal portion to the distal end of the shaft" is not sufficiently described in the written disclosure. However, page 8 of the specification discloses the LM dimension 13 of the shaft core decreasing from approximately 17 mm to approximately 14 mm from the upper end 9 to the distal end 11 of the distal portion, whereas the ribs 16 merge from the shaft core surface at the upper end 9 and reach a height of approximately 1 mm above the shaft core surface at the distal end 11. Since specification describes the dimension 13 decreasing by approximately 3 mm from the upper end 9 to the distal end 11, meaning that the height of the surface of the shaft core relative to the longitudinal axis of the shaft decreases by approximately 1.5 mm on each side of the shaft core from the upper end 9 to the distal end 11, while the height of the ribs 16 relative to the surface of the shaft core are described as increasing by approximately 1 mm from the upper end 9 to the distal end 11, the height of the plurality of ribs does not increase relative to the longitudinal axis of the shaft from the upper end 9 to the distal end 11. Thus, claim 1 is fully supported by the specification.

In addition, even absent the above-described disclosure, FIGS. 1-2 and 6-7 sufficiently depict this feature. A person skilled in the art would understand the height of the ribs as depicted in

FIGS. 1-2 and 6-7 slightly decreasing, not increasing, from the upper end 9 to the distal end 11. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 7-11 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bohn, U.S. Patent No. 5,507,833 in view of Webb, U.S. Patent No. 4,714,470. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, recites "the shaft having a core cross-section which tapers toward a distal end ... the distal portion of the shaft extending from a proximal start of the shaft to the distal end ... wherein the distal portion of the shaft comprises a plurality of longitudinal ribs protruding from the shaft." This feature is not taught or suggested by the combination of Bohn and Webb.

The body portion 22 of Bohn, which the Examiner relies upon as allegedly corresponding to the claimed distal portion, extends from the shank 23 to an end of the shaft near the stem 20. However, the body portion 22 of Bohn does not taper towards the end of the shaft near the stem 20, but instead tapers towards the area near the shank 23 located close to a proximal part of the shaft. Bohn, FIG. 5. In contrast, the claimed distal portion of the shaft extends from a proximal start to the distal end, the distal end being defined as the end of the shaft towards which a core cross-section tapers. Thus, the body portion 22 of Bohn does not correspond to the claimed distal portion. Bohn does include a distal portion 26 that extends from the shank 23 to a distal end 24 towards which a cross-section of the core taper. However, unlike the claimed invention, the distal portion 26 of Bohn does not include a plurality of ribs protruding from the shaft. The absent of ribs in Bohn is apparent from FIG. 10. Accordingly, Bohn fails to teach this feature.

Webb fails to overcome the deficiencies of Bohn in teaching this feature. In fact, Webb is merely relied upon by the Examiner for its alleged teachings of a rectangular cross-section of the core. Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2-11 depend from claim 1 and are also allowable.

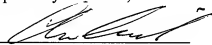
In view of the above, each of the claims in this application is in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding

rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. **246472008200**.

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Respectfully submitted,

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